DATELINE: NEW YORK #130 NOVEMBER 17, 1970
LAWRENCE S. FREUND

THE MUSIC BOX LADY
(VOICED PIECE, INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: DATELINE, NEW YORK -- PICTURES IN SOUND, WORDS AND MUSIC OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS IN AMERICA'S METROPOLIS. TODAY VOA CORRESPONDENT LARRY FREUND VISITS AN UNUSUAL SHOP WHERE THE MUSIC COMES IN BOXES.

VOICE: WHEN YOU OPEN THE DOOR OF RITA FORD'S SHOP ON MADISON AVENUE, A SMALL BELL WELCOMES YOU TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. THE RUSH OF TRAFFIC OUTSIDE -- THE BUSES, CARS AND TAXICABS -- SOMETIMES INTRUDES. BUT THE NOISE CAN'T BREAK THE SPELL CREATED BY SOUNDS, LIKE THESE ...

TAPE: CUT ONE -- 1835 MUSIC BOX

VOICE: THAT IS A MUSIC BOX. IT IS ONE OF THOSE DELIGHTFUL DEVICES THAT HAVE BEEN CHARMING PEOPLE FOR SOME TWO HUNDRED YEARS. SOME OF THEM ARE NOW IN MRS. FORD'S STORE ... INCLUDING THE ONE YOU JUST HEARD, A MUSIC BOX MADE IN THE YEAR 1835.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- MRS. FORD

"IT WAS MADE TO BE UNDER A CLOCK. THEY USED TO HAVE THESE BEAUTIFUL CLOCKS IN THE OLD DAYS AND THE MUSIC WORKS WERE CONNECTED WITH THE CLOCK WORKS AND THE MUSIC WOULD START PLAYING EVERY FIFTEEN OR THIRTY MINUTES OR EVERY HOUR. AS YOU NOTICE, THIS DOES HAVE VERY MUCH THE SOUND THAT SHOULD BE WITH A CLOCK."

VOICE: MRS. FORD -- WHO HAS BEEN RUNNING HER MUSIC BOX STORE FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS -- SAYS THAT THE DELICATE ANTIQUE MACHINES ARE BECOMING HARDER AND HARDER TO FIND. SHE CALLS THEM "COLLECTIBLES" -- AND THEY ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY EXPENSIVE AS THEY BECOME INCREASINGLY RARE.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- MRS. FORD

"TODAY IT IS A LITTLE DIFFICULT HAVING MUCH OF A COLLECTION OF ANTIQUE MUSIC BOXES, BECAUSE THEY ARE HIGHLY COLLECTIBLE. ALL OVER THE WORLD EVERYONE WANTS A LITTLE BIT OF THE PAST AND I THINK THIS GIVES IT TO THEM MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE THEY COULD POSSIBLY COLLECT."

VOICE: RITA FORD'S PRIZE MUSIC BOX -- AND HER MOST EXPENSIVE BOX -- IS MORE THAN A CENTURY OLD. IT'S A DELICATELY CRAFTED PIECE OF FURNITURE MADE IN SWITZERLAND WITH A GLEAMING BRONZE MECHANISM DISPLAYED BENEATH A GLASS COVER ...

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- MRS. FORD

"THIS IS ONE OF THE BOXES THAT APPARENTLY THE MAN WHO BOUGHT IT FOR HIS WIFE -- WE'RE NOW WINDING IT -- HE DECIDED THAT HE LOVED HER SO MUCH THAT HE HAD HER NAME INSCRIBED ON THE TOP OF IT. AND HER NAME, YOU SEE, IS ROSALIE. AND IT'S VERY BEAUTIFUL ROSEWOOD. AND THE QUALITY OF THE MUSIC IS REALLY SENSATIONAL."

VOICE: AND THIS IS THE ONE HUNDRED ONE YEAR-OLD SOUND OF ROSALIE'S MUSIC BOX:

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- MUSIC BOX

VOICE: THE CLASSIC SWISS-MADE MUSIC BOX MECHANISM CONSISTS OF A SMALL CYLINDER WITH TINY PINS THAT STRIKE THE KEYS THAT MAKE THE MUSIC. BUT THERE IS ANOTHER STYLE -- A ROUND METAL DISK, SOMEWHAT LIKE A RECORD WITH HOLES PUNCHED THROUGH IT. THAT WAS THE KIND OF MUSIC BOX MADE BY A GROUP OF GERMAN-BORN CRAFTSMEN WHEN THEY BEGAN PRODUCING THE DEVICES IN NEW JERSEY -- NEAR NEW YORK CITY -- IN THE 1890S'.

TAPE: CUT SIX -- MRS. FORD

"THEY GOT TOGETHER WITH SOME MEN WHO KNEW WHAT THE AMERICANS LIKED ... THAT A LIGHT, TINKLY SOUND JUST WAS NOT GOING TO BE POPULAR. AND THOSE, OF COURSE, WERE THE DAYS OF THE BIG BANDS -- JOHN PHILIP SOUSA AND ALL THE OTHER BIG BANDS.

TAPE: (CONT'D) AND THEY SAID: 'NOW IF WE CAN WORK THIS SOUND SO THAT IT EXPRESSES SOMETHING COMPLETELY AMERICAN, I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO DO VERY WELL WITH THIS PROJECT'. WHICH IS EXACTLY WHY THEY'RE SO POPULAR, BECAUSE OF THAT BIG SOUND THEY WERE ABLE TO GET IN THEIR VARIOUS MECHANICAL WAYS."

VOICE: AND SO, THE BIG SOUND OF THE EIGHTEEN NINETIES MUSIC BOXES...

TAPE: CUT SEVEN -- MUSIC BOX

VOICE: AT JUST ABOUT THE TIME THAT MUSIC BOX WAS MADE, PEOPLE WERE STARTING TO BUY ANOTHER MUSICAL DEVICE -- AN INVENTION BY THOMAS EDISON. IT WAS CALLED THE PHONOGRAPH AND IT QUICKLY LEFT THE MUSIC BOX FAR BEHIND.

BUT THAT DID NOT MEAN THE END OF THE MUSIC BOXES. MRS. FORD SELLS MANY OF THEM TODAY. ALL NEW -- TINY CAROUSELS, CARVED BOXES, AND EVEN MECHANICAL BIRDS THAT CHIRP AS REALISTICALLY AS THEIR FEATHERED COUSINS IN THE CITY PARKS. THE MUSICAL TUNES RANGE FROM OPERA ARIAS TO THE LATEST POPULAR BALLADS. AND THE PRICES RANGE FROM VERY REASONABLE TO VERY EXPENSIVE. BUT FOR MRS. FORD, IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF MONEY ....

TAPE: CUT EIGHT -- MRS. FORD

"I TELL PEOPLE THAT IT ISN'T THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT THEY SPEND (THAT IS IMPORTANT). IT'S IF THE TUNE SAYS SOMETHING TO TWO PEOPLE. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE EXPENSIVE."

VOICE: RITA FORD, SELLER OF MUSIC THAT COMES IN BOXES.

TAPE: CUT NINE -- MUSIC BOX TO TAG

ANNCR: YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO DATELINE, PICTURES IN SOUND, WORDS AND MUSIC OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS IN THE UNITED STATES. JOIN US NEXT ---------- FOR ANOTHER DATELINE.

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